

The Safety of a True Christian.

BEING THE

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SUBSTANCE

OF A

DISCOURSE

Delivered in LONDON,

In the YEAR 1744.

By JOHN CENNICK,

- “ Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit,” 2 Cor. i. 22.
“ The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,” Psalm xxv. 14.
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The Study of the Chinese

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE

OF A

DISCOURSE

Delivered in London



By JOHN H. MASON, Esq.
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EZEK. ix. 6.

"Come not near any man upon whom is the mark."

THESE words are a part of the charge which God gave to the destroying angels whom the prophet, in a vision, saw standing in the Lord's presence, each with his destroying weapon in his hand, and who were waiting at his word to slay without mercy all but such as were distinguished by a hidden or secret character, called in the text, "the mark." Ezekiel relates the manner of the sealing some to be saved, and the order to slay utterly all the rest, with an uncommon and striking solemnity. "He sings of mercy and judgment, of the goodness and severity of God" before the whole rebellious house of Israel: nor was the vision intended for their sakes only to whom at that time the oracles of God were sent, but the whole, like the most of the other inspired writings, concerns the race of mankind in general, and particularly those who are called by the Lord's name.

It was undoubtedly sent to warn men of an approaching day, wherein all who have satisfied themselves without "the power of godliness, the one thing

thing needful," should weep and wail bitterly, and be cut off and destroyed from among the people of God; and to inspire all who are any ways disposed to be saved, to make their election sure, and to get their interest and part secured in the book of life, as well as to shew forth their safe and happy condition "who are sealed to the day of redemption," and who have obtained of "God our Saviour the witness of the Spirit, that they are the children of God."

The blessings as well as curses made to the Israelites under the law have been observed chiefly to relate to things temporal, but then they were shadows of eternal things, and of which now the gospel treats plainly and without a veil. Hence we may innocently conclude, that how far soever this vision might relate to the overthrow and rejection of the Jews, on account of their unbelief, idolatry, and perverse behaviour, yet it certainly had respect to a time of greater desolation than that of cutting off the Israelites, or dispersing and scattering them among the nations: For St. John, in his book of Revelations, mentions of the things which shall come to pass in the last day, in much the same manner as in this part of Ezekiel's prophecy.

He saw that some angels, who had power to hurt the earth and the sea, &c. were charged not to do it "till the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads," and then to hurt and torment such who had not received that seal. Thus Ezekiel says, "There stood a man by the brazen altar, cloathed in white linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side," who was appointed to set a mark on all that were mourn-

ers in Israel, and who sighed because of the abominations of Jerusalem; and when he had done this, then the other angels, who had destroying weapons in their hands, were commanded "to go out after him and spare not, neither shew pity, but kill utterly old and young, women, maids, and little children, and to begin at the Lord's sanctuary;" but at the same time they were ordered, "Come not near any man on whom is the mark."

The person cloathed in white linen is, no doubt, our Saviour; for in this way he is described by all those who have seen him in his glory. His inkhorn is his pierced side, out of which he seals and marks his inheritance who are in the world. When he had said with a loud voice on the cross, "It is finished!" then were all his people ransomed, and the whole world retrieved and saved out of the enemy's hand; but after Jesus was dead, a soldier pierced his side, that out of his heart's most precious and costly blood he might sprinkle them, and mark them as a shepherd marks his sheep. This also is promised to all those who overcome, "I will write upon thee the name of my God, and I will write upon thee my new name." This is in other places called, "the secret of the Lord," and this appellation is given it by Job, David, and Solomon. It is also called, "that new name which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it." It is the mark of the Lamb in their foreheads, the divine frontlet which the bishop of our souls bestows on all who are invited to the marriage-supper. In other parts of scripture the Holy Ghost calls it "a jewel put on the forehead." In short, it is no other than our Saviour's giving to the soul the seal and earnest
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of his Spirit, whereby he makes himself known to them as he does not to the world, and in which they rejoice with joy unspeakable, knowing that nothing shall separate them from his love, or rend them out of his hands. They have received the image and mark of Jesus; the name of God is upon them; the engraving whereof is like the engraving of a signet, which none read, or blot out, or efface, but he only who is the Lord of hosts, and who has loved them with everlasting love, which is only known to the Lamb and themselves who have received it.

This is the One Thing which so many, with all their splendid shew of christianity, yet lack, and without which it will avail very little to have been called christians.

The Holy Spirit, who is also a faithful and true witness, will not suffer any to suppose they are right in the sight of God till they have received of him the Lord's badge and mark. He continually troubles and disturbs the profane and wicked man with shewing him his spiritual nakedness, his crimes and aggravating sins; and as once he called to Adam in the garden after his fall, "Adam, where art thou?" so he calls the sleepy and unconcerned part of the world, as if he said to each, Where art thou? In what a state art thou? Knowest thou not, O poor soul, that thou art still a servant of sin and satan; thou art unconverted; thou art no christian; thou art an enemy of Jesus; thy life, thy words, and thoughts, thy whole course is contrary to the scriptures and true religion, and also contrary to the convictions of thy conscience? Shouldest thou be called

called away in thy passions, or snatched out of the world in thy drunkenness or whoredoms, how wouldst thou meet death? how bear the judgment of the last day, or stand at the bar of the Lord? Thus secretly does the Spirit strive with the rebellious, and seeks with paternal tenderness to win them to Jesus. Thus he makes his mind to be felt often when no eye sees it, and in such a manner expostulates with souls, that sometimes they tremble, weep and pray; they confess their unsafe state, and seem to resolve to alter their course and be converted, but as soon as the next morning light shines, or as soon as their fright is a little over, they hope they shall neither die or be called to judgment yet, and again take their former liberty of sinning, and with greater disobedience and presumption, at last quench the Holy Spirit, and send him away grieved; but whether he departs or shews forth all long-suffering towards them, he imprints too deep for all company, sin, pleasure, or satan himself to blot it out, that they are in the road to perish, and without that happy part of christianity, the feeling of his love, which all his children have,

Nor are people of a self-righteous disposition left to go on comfortably without any misgivings and doubts in regard to their being right: for the same Holy Spirit, who convinces the sinful of their gross outward crimes and offences, is also continually busied in shewing these that their righteousness is not perfect. It is as if he daily preached to their hearts, "Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting." He makes them feel how subject they are to the fear of death as well

as others ; what natural inbred sins rise and stir within their hearts, while they look so well without. How much self-admiring, spiritual pride, hypocrisy and double-heartedness mingles with all their piety and devotion ; how far they are from having a single eye ; how far from being truly low in heart and full of faith ; how worldly minded ; how carnal ; how dead and cold towards Jesus : and when they have carried their religious acts farther than ordinary, and put all their good purposes and vows in execution, he still whispers, " Yet lackest thou one thing, still one thing is needful. This dying persons betray to others who stand round their beds repeating their moral lives, duties, charities and good works, trying thereby to persuade them they are safe ; they still are uneasy and dissatisfied ; they are not yet without secret fears and jealousies lest they should miscarry ; they are sensible things are not right with them ; they have not a living faith in Jesus Christ ; they find somewhat is wanting still ; and indeed they think justly, and it is a pity they should be by any means cheated, for they want " truth in the inward parts ; " they want to see Jesus is theirs ; they want to feel the redemption, to be sealed ; they want the mark. As soon as this is felt within, and the Spirit has testified of this to their hearts, as soon as he has shed abroad the love of Christ, or given them one divine touch, one view of their part in the blood of the Lamb, or shewn them a reconciled and loving Jesus, they can die in peace, they sing and think with faithful Simeon, " Now Lord let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, "

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All people are so far enlightened by the Sun of righteousness, as to see they are not right; and who can, or will afterwards venture on, and not seek to secure to themselves, through the assurance of faith, their part in the book of life, and in the flock and fold of the good Shepherd, but stay carelessly without the door of his wounds, such must look to be of that unhappy multitude, of whom Jesus complains, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life; I would have healed you, but ye would not be healed; I would have gathered you often as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not, and who, when the messenger of death shall call them out of the world, and when they stand with the small and great in the last day, shall fall in the general slaughter of the old and young who have not the mark.

In that day the having had a name to live will avail nothing; the riches of the rich will cry against him in the ears of the Lord of hosts, the wisdom of the wise will fail him, and he will weep bitterly; the strong man's knees will smite dreadfully together, and every one's face gather paleness, and no prayer, no plea, no excuse, no cries or tears will avert one moment the blow, or move to pity the destroying angels; they must remove mercy out of their eyes and hands, and slay utterly all who have not known God, nor obeyed his righteous gospel. They have not the mark of the sheep, and must perish with the goats. They have not the seal of the living God: satan may seize them: as reprobate silver, so shall they be refused in the day of decision, in the day when God shall try all them that dwell upon the earth.

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When the Lord was minded to bring his last plague upon Egypt, and to make every house feel his displeasure at once, he first commanded his own people to sacrifice the paschal Lamb, and sprinkle the blood of the Lamb upon their door-post, that when the destroying angel should pass by at midnight, he might see the mark, and not enter that house. Accordingly all who feared the Lord, and hearkened to the voice of his minister Moses, did so; they made ready a lamb of the first year without blemish, and eat of the sacrifice in haste, at the same time they sprinkled the blood upon their door-posts and on the lintels; and while they were eating their supper, the destroyer received his commission, and without any mercy passed through the whole land of Egypt, and slew the eldest or first-born in every house, so that there was a cry heard throughout the land, such as never had been known since the world began; meanwhile the Israelites were all safe in their houses, they had the mark on their doors, they had sprinkled the blood in faith and were preserved; so that he who smote down the most reverend and ancient in every family, in that night much to be remembered, did not touch them.

Thus is it now: Jesus the chief priest, and all his ministers have forewarned us, that the angels of his wrath stand at his gates waiting only for the word, and in one moment the four who have power over the winds would loose their hands, and raise the last and final tempest, the finest cities would be laid in ruins instantly, the most magnificent buildings would be overturned, and not a stone left upon another which should not
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be thrown down, the mountains and hills would be swept away, and the sea and its waves would be roaring every where, while the pillars of heaven would be so shaken that the stars would fall as when a fig-tree casts its untimely figs shaken by a great wind; mean while the six who stand with their flaming swords drawn, would smite the nations, and all the kindreds of the earth, with an entire slaughter. This is called in the prophets, "the day of gloominess and darkness, which shall burn as an oven, and in which all the ungodly shall be as stubble." But before this day our Saviour has shewn us how to be saved. All who hear his voice, like wise virgins, get ready, they come in faith to himself, the true paschal Lamb, and his Spirit sprinkles on the door-posts of the heart his precious blood. "We are come, faith the apostle, to the blood of sprinkling." This secures all who have found it; so that let the judgment hasten on, or linger, they have received the mark; and let it be this evening or next midnight, or at cock-crowing, or to-morrow morning that the angels of destruction shall pass through the guilty world, or let all out of the bottomless pit be unbound to go over the earth to destroy all thereon, no harm shall happen to the sealed-ones, nor shall any evil come near their dwellings; a thousand may fall beside them, and ten thousand at their right hands, but it shall not come nigh them. No plague shall cut them off, no son of violence shall approach to hurt them; and wherefore? because they obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and fled to the sanctuary of the cross of Jesus; they have their hearts and consciences sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb. Their sins are blotted out, they have be-

believed and are saved. The Holy Ghost has sealed
 them, and anointed them kings and priests to God
 and the Lamb, and they shall stand before the God
 of the whole earth safely. His new name who
 died for them, the name of the New Jerusalem
 and the name of his Father is upon them. If the
 blood of a common Lamb sprinkled in faith on
 the doors of the Hebrews could so keep off the
 angel from doing them harm, and if he could so
 be deterred from hurting them, that not one suffered
 the least damage, how much more must the blood
 of the Lamb of God sprinkled on the heart preserve
 it against all the gates and powers of hell in safe-
 ty for ever! Satan, and every enemy, knows what
 the blood of Jesus can do; he has already heard
 the Judge's charge, "Touch not mine anointed;
 Come not near any man on whom is the mark."
 He has heard the eternal decree made in their fa-
 vour, and trembles before the blood of Jesus, and
 like lightning flies before it. O people, who art
 sealed and marked herewith, "Who is like unto
 thee? thou art saved of the Lord; the Holy One of
 Israel is thy defence, the everlasting God is thy
 refuge."

When Rahab was told by the spies what the
 Lord would do to Jericho, and how all therein
 should die by the sword, she also was warned to
 put out of her window the mark and sign which
 was told her, and she did so, she hung out the
 scarlet thread, and when the day came, in which
 at the last blowing of the rams-horns, the angels
 of God overturned and threw down the wall of
 the city, her house stood safe, though it was built
 upon it. The Holy Ghost signifies hereby, as by
 the sprinkling of blood, the same preservation of those

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who believe, and out of whose window hangs, as it were the scarlet thread, the bond of the covenant in the blood of Christ. Let the stars fall, let the skies be rolled up, and the heavens pass away with a great noise, and the firmament melt with fervent heat, let all God's thunder-bolts fall, and break in pieces every goodly thing, and let the showers of fire and brimstone fall and set the whole universe in a flame, they shall be safe, as Rahab in her house upon the walls of Jericho, they shall be out of danger, every thunder-clap, every storm and judgment, every stroke of divine wrath, and every destroying angel, have their commission, "Come not near any man on whom is my mark." Such shall wait, like virgins who have oil in their lamps, when they shall see the Lord descend with ten thousand of his saints; they shall wait with inexpressible longing to see the Son of Man coming in the clouds, and to hear the cry, "Behold he comes, the Bridegroom comes, go ye up and meet him in the air. O how will they rejoice! how thankful will they be that once in their life-time they laid hold on eternal life, and made their calling and election sure by believing unfeignedly on Jesus Christ! How will they adore the riches of his grace, who prevented them to deceive themselves by resting without the door of the fold, by stopping short of "the mark of the prize of their high calling," or by sleeping like others who are foolish virgins without oil in their lamps.

But may I not ask you who are present here, in which number would you be reckoned, think ye, should the trumpet now sound? are you of the
blessed

bleſſed few who are marked? or are you ignorant what it means?

You know in the parables of the ten virgins, that all of them expected the Bridegroom, all were profeſſors, "all went out to meet him;" and therein conſiſted the wiſdom of the wiſe, "they took oil in their lamps," and were ready to meet the Bridegroom, let him come when he would; on the other hand, the folly of the fooliſh was their neglect. Setting aſide all the nations of thoſe who are not named after Chriſt, and who make little of his appearing or ſecond advent, one half, if not more, of thoſe who are called by his name, are fooliſh virgins, and take the lamp, have a glorious profeſſion, but have no oil; they are without eternal life, without the grace that bringeth ſalvation, and ſleep on and take their reſt as if all was well, they ſlumber and dream of being chriſtians, and think they have made ſome proficiency in the true religion of Jeſus Chriſt, when, dear me! they know only his name, and have no more the witneſs of his Spirit that they are his, and know no more what it is to be ſealed by him to the day of redemption, than Turks, or children unborn: To ſuch the day of the Lord would be terrible, and for them to hear the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" would be worſe than to hear the loudeſt thunders of mount Sinai, worſe than to have heard the ſhrieks and cries of Egypt when their firſt-born were ſlain; Such would wail becauſe of him, and the mourning of ſuch at the deſcending of the Lord to judgment would be more and worſe than the mourning

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in the valley of Hadadrimmon ! O may I in that day be found worthy to stand before the Son of Man !

What will make the day of judgment more awful will be the bringing to light all the secret sins, the black and horrid crimes, as well as all the flighting and neglecting salvation, the hard thoughts and words spoken against the Lamb, and revealing the hidden mystery of iniquity in every creature ; all which might have been done away in the fountain of the blood of Christ, had not they made light of it, and trifled till the season and day of grace passed over. Then must the hypocrites and dry and dead professors feel first the sword of the destroyer : " Begin, says God, at my sanctuary," begin at those who have named my name, at the ministers and unfaithful servants who have rejected the Corner-Stone, who have not warned the souls, but been careless watchmen, who have rather hushed and lulled to sleep such as were awaking and beginning to be concerned, persuading them, there is no more necessary than an honest moral life, and " who have healed the wound of the daughter of my people slightly, crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace : " and they began at the honourable men, which are before the house of God, i. e. they began with the persons cried up for good men, and noted and honoured for their strictness and devotion, for having done a great deal, and compassed sea and land to make a proselyte ; but who, after all, were without the seal of the Spirit. In that day, and not till then, will the cause be decided between the false and true professor of Christ. Then, however they have
dissembled.

dissembled, and made a fine appearance of religion, all but inward and pure christianity will burn up, and leave the almost christian miserable; but as they cheated themselves, and liked to be deceived, they must bear the loss and blame, because in their life-time, and in the day of their visitation, they did not prize or value the precious wounds and blood of Jesus, nor hid in the clefts of that Rock. They slighted him, they lived without him, they loved the world, they chose the honour of men, they would not come to our Saviour for life, they chose their own way, and ventured on, and must now feel what it is to be without Christ in the world.

It will be far otherwise with the children of God, the once despised and reproached, but now honoured and blessed people. As soon as Jesus sits on the clouds, and all the heavens are opened, and their innumerable hosts blowing their trumpets, and harping on harps to the Lamb that was slain, how will they lift up their heads! the first smile they get from their dear Lord shall more than reward them for all what they have undergone and suffered on his account in the world; but, he shall confess them in the presence of his Father, and before all his holy angels, These, will he say, are they that have followed me, these continued with me. "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, come up hither." Those arms which were once bound to the cross shall embrace them, and the same lips once struck by the officer shall kiss them. They shall be caught up to meet him, they shall sit down with him on the throne; and when he shall ascend from his judgment-seat, they

they too shall ascend with him, and enter into the wedding chamber, before the door is shut. They shall have a right to enter by the gates into the holy city, and to eat of the fruit of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God, and shall live for ever with him.

Ah! do not you wish to be among these children of the bride-chamber? do not you long after this happiness, and is not Balaam's with the desire of your heart, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his? Methinks I hear you say it is. Why then, nothing can hinder you but your own poor bad self-will. Ask any thing of Jesus, and he will do it for you. Come to him honestly, and with an upright and sincere heart, and seek his salvation, and you shall find it. Be in earnest, for his name's sake, and for your own soul's sake; leave all the world, and for this moment retire out of it, and devote and give up yourselves wholly to follow him, nor satisfy yourself with a self denying and mortified behaviour, or with an innocent or strict life, but look for the inward witness, the seal and mark which I have been treating of, and which is on the hearts and foreheads of all the inheritance of the Lord; I mean, get such a confidence of his love to you, and such a secret and hidden witness of his spirit with your spirits that you are children of God, and that you are destined by him to be with him for ever, and you will not be ignorant what is his mark, nor will you any more dread death, or have a fearful looking for of judgment; you will sit down at his feet in peace, you will sleep and wake happy; live

and die to the Lord, and be saved with an everlasting salvation, will be blessed in this world and in the world to come, in time and in eternity, and nothing shall be for ever able to pluck you out of his hands; you will bless yourselves in the Lord, and have your hearts leap for joy, when you are called hence to be no more seen; for then you will go in peace to God your Saviour: Or should you stay till he comes, you would meet him with eternal joy and gladness. To him be glory and thanksgiving and salvation and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

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